Module A – Component 1 narrative:

Daneesh was instrumental in the development of a new program at his University’s main branch campus in Singapore. It was an undergraduate degree program modified to meet the needs and interests of the students in the South East Asian region. Daneesh was the program coordinator in Singapore. A number of new staff were appointed at the branch campus to deliver the program.

Early meetings between the Head of Department at the Australian campus, Veronica, Daneesh and other relevant staff on the Australian campus determined that the modified course would have two thirds of its units in common with the course delivered at the Australian campus, but that one third (i.e. one year’s work) would be different. This would consist of four new units and four ‘adapted’ units (i.e. units in which the content and assessment tasks would be considerably adapted to suit the local environment and also meet program accreditation requirements of several countries in the region).

Daneesh arranged for several staff who had been appointed for the program at the branch campus to submit suggested changes to the four units which were to be modified for the new program. Staff at the branch campus also proposed basic structures for the four new units. The modified course structure was subsequently approved by relevant University committees for delivery at the branch campus.

Soon after, Daneesh expressed the view that two of the new staff at the branch campus should have the responsibility for fully developing the four new units, including all teaching materials and assessment tasks. Veronica, the Australian-based Head of Department, denied this request stating that it was against Australian Government policy on the delivery of Australian degrees at offshore campuses. She also made Daneesh aware of concerns expressed by the Australian campus staff that assessment standards in the units delivered at the branch campus units might not be equivalent to those of the units delivered at the Australian campus and proposed that stringent moderation processes be put in place.

Daneesh maintained that the branch campus staff had the expertise and experience to develop and deliver units at the required standard but that he was willing to implement, for all branch campus staff involved in the program, a professional development course on assessment and moderation strategies and standards, to ensure that processes for ensuring equivalence of outcomes would be in place. Veronica finally agreed to the proposal on the proviso that students’ results for the first three semesters would be closely monitored and that (limited) resources would be made available for some double-marking of
students’ assessments. In addition, at the end of the second year, she would appoint an independent reviewer to evaluate the delivery and assessment standards of the modified version of the course.

Discussion:

* What does the AVCC Code of Practice and Guidelines for Australian Universities on the provision of education for international students say about the delivery of an offshore program which is not identical to the one delivered at the Australian campus?

* Would the implementation strategy outlined in the story comply with (a) the AVCC Code of Practice and (b) policy at your own university?

* Identify the leadership behaviours portrayed by Veronica and by Daneesh, and comment on their appropriateness in the given situation.